

Message Text

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ACTION DLOS-06

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6691
INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 8295

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLOS, SA
SUBJ: SAUDI ARABIA AND THE LAW OF THE SEA

1. EMBASSY LOS OFFICER DISCUSSED LOS MATTERS DEC 20 WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S LOS EXPERT MOHAMMED MADANI. MADANI IS PLEASED THAT THE US IS BEGINNING EARLY TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT SESSION IN NEW YORK IN MAY. HE SHARES THE US VIEW THAT WE ARE AT A NOW OR NEVER STAGE. HE HOPES WE CAN BRING IT OFF BUT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER IS IS POSSIBLE. HE BELIEVES THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO TAKE OFF THE KID GLOVES AND FOR US TO TELL RECALCITRANT STATES THAT WE ARE MAKING ONE LAST EFFORT BUT IF IT DOESN'T WORK WE WILL NOT BE THE BIG LOSERS. US INTERESTS ARE ADEQUATELY PROTECTED BY OUR GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION, STRENGTH AND CUSTOMARY INTERNATIONAL LAW. OUR LEVERAGE ON THE QUESTION OF DEEP SEABED RESOURCES IS PARTICULARLY STRONG AND SHOULD BE USED TO MAXIMUM EFFECT.

2. MADANI SUGGESTED THAT WE ADD ALGERIA AND EGYPT TO THE LIST OF COUNTRIES TO WHICH WE DEVOTE PARTICULAR ATTENTION.
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TION IN THE PRE-SESSION CONSULTATIONS. ALGERIA IS DIFFICULT TO DEAL WITH AND HAS A TENDENCY TO TAKE EXTREME POSITIONS ALMOST AUTOMATICALLY. POSSIBLY, HOWEVER, ALGERIA WILL RESPOND TO SOME TOUGH TALK AND IF ALGERIA CAN BE REINED IN IT WILL REMOVE A RALLYING POINT FOR OTHER DELEGATIONS WHICH AT PREVIOUS SESSIONS HAVE SEEMED MORE INTERESTED IN

DISPUTATION THAN IN SERIOUS NEGOTIATION. MADANI SAID THAT IT MIGHT ALSO BE WORTH OUR WHILE TO TALK TO THE IRAQIS BECAUSE OF THEIR PRESENT POSITION AS HEAD OF THE ASIAN GROUP.

3. ON TACTICS, MADANI SAID THAT WE MIGHT CONSIDER GOING FOR AGREEMENT AT THE NEXT SESSION ON ONLY THOSE ISSUES HANDLED BY THE FIRST AND THIRD COMMITTEES, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THERE IS PERHAPS A GREATER DEGREE OF UNANIMITY ON ISSUES DEALT WITH BY THE SECOND COMMITTEE. MADANI'S REASONING IS THAT REGIONAL DISPUTES OVER TERRITORIAL WATERS (SUCH AS THAT BETWEEN GREECE AND TURKEY) WILL PREVENT FINAL AGREEMENT ON COMMITTEE TWO ISSUES AT THE NEXT SESSION. HE DID NOT THINK THAT THERE WOULD BE TIME TO HAMMER OUT SUCH DIFFERENCES REGIONALLY BEFORE THE NEXT LOS SESSION BUT SUGGESTED IT MIGHT BE WORTH THE EFFORT. (MADANI'S PREOCCUPATION WITH REGIONAL DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY AN ARTICLE HE REFERRED TO BY MARK JAMES IN THE SANTIAGO LAW REVIEW ON THE SUBJECT: REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL LAW AND LAW OF THE SEA.)

4. MADANI CONFIRMED THAT THE SAG WAS STICKING TO ITS POSITION ON FREEDOM OF NAVIGATION IN INTERNATIONAL STRAITS DESPITE CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE FROM SOME OF ITS GULF NEIGHBORS TO ACCEPT THE PRINCIPLE OF INNOCENT PASSAGE IN THE PERSIAN GULF.
PORTER

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